

Being Proactive in School Safety, Bullying Prevention and Relational Aggression

Guidelines for Local School Districts (Proposed Components of a Comprehensive Effort)

1. **Definition, Assessment and District/School Safe School Policy/Procedures**
 - a. **Bullying Defined:** Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students.
 - i. **Physical bullying**—hitting and/or punching
 - ii. **Verbal bullying**—teasing or name-calling
 - iii. **Non-verbal or emotional bullying**—this includes intimidation through gestures, social exclusion and relational aggression.
 - iv. **Cyber bullying**—sending insulting messages by phone or computer, or electronic messaging
 - b. **Assess the prevalence of safe school incidents, bullying and relational aggression:** Prior to implementing effective prevention efforts, it is important to assess the level to which the problem exists and assess the most common areas where incidents are occurring through data collection.
 - i. **Student assessment questionnaires**
 - ii. **School reports each incident on RISEP as they occur.**
 - iii. **Teachers and other school personnel provide observation and experiences.**
 - iv. **Ask parents, friends and others to report suspected incidents of bullying and relational aggression.**
 - c. **District/School/Class Safe School Policy:** Each district should review its current Safe and Drug-Free School's Policy. If needed, the district should revise policy to more effectively deal with school safety, bullying and relational aggression. Policy needs to be clearly written and enforced consistently.
 - i. **District/School/Class revisit and if needed revise Safe and Drug-Free School Policy.**
 - ii. **Train faculty and staff (including aides, coaches, assistants) on policy and procedures**
 - iii. **Inform parents and students of policy and procedures**
 - iv. **Consistently follow policy with each incident as it occurs.**
2. **Effective Prevention Programs/Strategies**
 - a. **Bullying Prevention:** Effective bullying and relational aggression prevention programs require:
 - i. **Focus on the entire school environment**
 - ii. **Change in climate and social norms**—create a school climate of positive staff/student interaction with a focus on

- prevention.
 - iii. **Comprehensive, school-wide effort involving all adults and students in the school community.**
 - b. **Bullying and Relational Aggression Awareness:** Bringing awareness to the issue is the first step in an effective comprehensive effort.
 - i. **HRSA's National Bullying Prevention Campaign—**
<http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov>
 - ii. **Key elements of a district/school Campaign**
 - a. **Cohesive, consistent, coordinated effort—**
consensus on goals, messages, prevention tactics, follow-up, enforcement and evaluation factors
 - b. **Engagement by relevant, diverse audiences—**
family, school-community, law enforcement, policymakers, youth and local media
 - c. **Identify and promote proven, effective programs/strategies to be utilized in schools within districts.**
 - i. **Prevention Dimensions "Utah's Safe and Drug-Free School PK-12 Prevention Program"** This is utilized as a foundation of prevention throughout the state.
 - ii. **Other available Prevention Programs/Strategies:**
 - a. **Utah Behavioral Initiative**
 - b. **REACH**
 - c. **Dan Olweus Bullying Prevention**
 - d. **Community of Caring**
 - e. **Bully Proofing Your School**
 - f. **Second Step**
 - g. **Get Real About Violence**
 - h. **Empower Training**
 - d. **Utilize existing professional development events to include school violence prevention.** Training of all school personnel is critical in effective implementation of the prevention effort.
 - i. **School administrators, faculty, and all school personnel, including certificated and non-certificated employees**
 - ii. **School lunch personnel**
 - iii. **Bus Drivers, Custodians, Hall and recess monitors, etc.**
- 3. **Targeted Prevention/Intervention Strategies (Student Assistance Programs)**
 - a. **Offer additional support services for students who are bullied through student assistance programs.**
 - b. **Through school counselors and social workers provide interventions for the students who bully so that they don't repeat the offense.**
 - c. **Triangle approach in dealing with the issue.**

- i. **Keep the school climate/environment safe and supportive for all students**
 - ii. **Hold offender accountable for actions**
 - iii. **Help offender so action is not repeated.**
- 4. **Appropriate Interagency Partnerships**
 - a. **The violence issue is just not a school problem.** To address bullying and other forms of violence it is essential to have the community and local municipalities involved with implementation of effective prevention efforts. Several community agencies have offered help and support with the issue. Make our districts and schools aware of how they can partnership and be involved.
 - i. **Prevent Child Abuse Utah**
 - ii. **Human Rights Education Center**
 - iii. **Primary Children’s Hospital—the Injury Free Coalition for Kids.**
 - iv. **PTA Partnerships**

References

Olweus, D. (2004). *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. NY:Blackwell.

National Bullying Campaign: www.StopBullyingNow.hrsa.gov

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools,
<http://www.k12coordinator.org/onlinece/onlineevents/bullying/>

National Education Association, <http://www.nea.org/schoolsafety/bullying.html>

Limber, S. P., & Small, M.A. (in press). State laws and policies to address bullying in U.S. schools.
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New Jersey Department of Education (2002). *Model policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation and bullying on school property, at school-sponsored functions, and on school busses.*
<http://www.nj.gov/njded/parents/bully.htm>